



# Environmental Bulletin

Volume 15, Number 17  
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*from the Savannah River Site*

Documents available for public review

## **Mixed Waste Management Facility and M-Area Hazardous Waste Management Facility Permit Modifications Public Meeting Notice**

The United States Department of Energy (DOE)-Savannah River Operations Office has requested from the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) modifications to Savannah River Site's (SRS) 2000 Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Part B Permit Renewal Application for Volume VII for the Mixed Waste Management Facility and the SRS 1992 RCRA Part B Permit Renewal Application for Volume III detailing modifications to operations at the M-Area Hazardous Waste Management Facility.

The revision (Rev 11 of Volume VII) proposes to permanently add the use of spray evaporator(s) to augment the irrigation system. The revision (Rev 20 of Volume III) discusses the schedule for the Western Sector Corrective Action Plan.

This notice begins a 60-day comment period. More informa-

tion, including the actual permit applications, is available for review and copying at the DOE Public Reading Room located in the University of South Carolina-Aiken Library, or by contacting personnel identified in this notice. The Permittee's compliance history during the life of the permit being modified is available from SCDHEC.

A public meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 25, 3 p.m. at the Aiken County Public Library. Representatives from SRS will be available to answer questions on the modifications. Written Comments may be sent to SCDHEC. All comments will be considered in the final decision. For additional information, contact Jim Moore, Westinghouse Savannah River Company, Savannah River Site, 742-A, Aiken, SC 29808. Please send your comments to J. T. Litton, Director, Division of Waste Management, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, 2600 Bull Street, Columbia, SC 29201-1708.

## **FONSI Issued for EA on new borrow pit at SRS**

A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was signed on July 20, 2004, for the Environmental Assessment (EA) (DOE/EA-1501) prepared for the proposed construction, operation, and eventual closure of a new borrow pit, and its alternatives, at the Savannah River Site (SRS), located near Aiken, South Carolina. The purpose of this proposed facility, known as the Burma Road II Borrow Pit, would be to provide SRS with a new source of structural fill material for site projects. The existing SRS borrow pits are either nearly depleted, already obligated to ongoing environmental restoration projects, or would not provide fill with the proper specifications. In addition, the anticipated need for a future volume and quality of fill for planned SRS projects could not be economically met by offsite sources. The proposed 80-acre borrow pit has an estimated 3.8 million cubic yards of suitable structural fill, which would meet site needs past the year 2020.

DOE, after a review of the EA, has determined that the proposed action is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and, as a result of this determination, the preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required. Therefore, DOE has issued the FONSI.

If you would like a copy of the final EA and FONSI, please contact:

Andrew R. Grainger, NEPA Compliance Officer  
U. S. Department of Energy, Savannah River Operations Office  
Building 742-A, Room 179, Aiken, SC 29808  
e-mail: nepa@srs.gov  
Fax/telephone: 1-800-881-7292

## SRS Environmental Report for 2003

The *SRS Environmental Report for 2003* is ready for distribution. The report's accompanying data tables again are published on CD only.

The printed version of the 112-page report houses the CD, which includes not only data tables but an electronic version of the report; an appendix of site, environmental sampling location, dose, and groundwater maps; and complete 2003 reports from a number of other SRS organizations. The environmental report also is available electronically on the Environmental Services Section home page (on site) and the World Wide Web (off site).

If you would like to receive a hard copy of the report and CD, **please e-mail your request to Jim Moore ([jim02.moore@srs.gov](mailto:jim02.moore@srs.gov)) by Tuesday, August 31; be sure to include your name and address.**

## CAB makes Recommendations

### **193- Public Dissemination of Waste Disposition Information**

The SRS Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) is interested in factual information reaching stakeholders and media and recommended that DOE-SR hold an educational forum on the waste disposition and tank closure strategy. The Board also asked that DOE-SR provide access to pertinent reports and articles under a special Waste Disposition and Tank Closure section on the SRS CAB web site with links to credible, third party sources and that DOE-SR provide rapid news releases, background point papers, or fact sheets to clarify misleading and/or non-factual information in the media or in public debate.

### **Recommendation 194- DWPF Recycle**

While the main priority remains salt processing and tank closure, the SRS CAB supports increasing tank space capacity as funding allows and therefore recommends that DOE-SR increase its emphasis on Defense Waste Processing Facility (DWPF) recycle reduction through implementation of technology and/or management techniques including contractor incentives. The Board requested that DOE-SR accelerate the design, construction and regulatory approvals of the acid-side evaporator and strive to have it operational by FY07 and asked DOE-SR to accelerate the near-term DWPF recycle disposal and limited low-curie salt to Saltstone campaigns as soon as regulatory approvals allow. Finally, the CAB recommended that DOE-SR provide specific dates as soon as possible, but no later than December 31, 2004, on when the CAB can expect feedback on the progress of reducing the DWPF recycle, the evaporator installation, and low curie salt disposition.

### **Recommendation 195 - Receipt of Spent Nuclear Fuel at SRS**

In an effort to improve the SRS Spent Nuclear Fuel (SNF) program, the SRS CAB recommended that DOE-HQ continue to investigate and implement an SNF disposition strategy that will accelerate the program and requested an update on the SNF program uncertainties by January 15, 2005. The SRS CAB also recommended that DOE-HQ identify SNF that can not be directly disposed into the Federal Repository prior to its shipment to SRS, and establish and document an alternative disposition prior to accepting it for shipment to SRS. They asked DOE-HQ to present the direct disposal form of spent fuel to Nuclear Regulatory Commission immediately and obtain a binding determination that it can actually be disposed in the Federal Repository. The Board recommended that DOE-HQ keep H Canyon operable until there is certainty that spent fuel, which could be processed there, can be disposed in the federal repository.

### **Recommendation 196- Plutonium Shipments and Disposition**

DOE is developing a disposition plan for its excess plutonium. The SRS CAB is concerned that DOE may already have a proposed plutonium disposition strategy that they have not shared with the public. The SRS CAB recommends that DOE ensure an exit strategy exists before commitments are made to receive surplus plutonium at SRS. The Board also requested that DOE present the preferred proposed plutonium disposition strategy, its implementation, and schedule to the SRS CAB by September 26, 2004, and make available to the CAB and the public any studies to support this plutonium disposition option. The CAB also requested that DOE ensure a public forum and comment period on the plutonium disposition option is included in the NEPA process.

# Current NEPA Actions Affecting SRS

- ***Disposition of Scrap Metals Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) (DOE/EIS-0327)***

This PEIS will evaluate alternatives for disposition of DOE scrap metals that may have been in radiological areas. The disposition options to be analyzed include continuation of the suspension on unrestricted release of metals for recycling, unrestricted release of scrap metals for recycling, and disposal. The notice of intent (NOI) for this PEIS was issued on July 12, 2001. A public scoping meeting was held on July 31, 2001, in North Augusta, South Carolina. The schedule is uncertain.

- ***Supplemental PEIS on Stockpile Stewardship and Management for a Modern Pit Facility (DOE/EIS-0236-S2)***

This PEIS will evaluate alternative sites (Los Alamos National Laboratory, Nevada Test Site, Pantex Plant, Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, and Savannah River Site) for a Modern Pit Facility, to provide the capability to manufacture plutonium pits for the United States nuclear weapons stockpile. This PEIS will be followed by a site-specific EIS to address the impacts of construction and operation of the Modern Pit Facility at the selected site. The NOI for this PEIS was issued on September 23, 2002. A local public scoping meeting was held on October 29, 2002, in North Augusta, SC. Information regarding the draft PEIS can be found at 68 FR 33487, June 4, 2003. The draft PEIS may be viewed electronically at [www.mpfeis.com](http://www.mpfeis.com). The final supplemental PEIS has been delayed due to Congressional concerns about timing and scope of project.

- ***West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP) Waste Management EIS (DOE/EIS-0337)***

DOE's proposed action (and preferred alternative) is to ship radioactive wastes that are either currently in storage on the WVDP site, or that will be generated from WVDP operations over the next ten years, to offsite disposal locations, and to continue managing its onsite waste storage tanks. The potential environmental consequences of the proposed action are evaluated in the final EIS, including impacts to workers and the public from waste transportation and waste management. The final EIS also analyzes an alternative under which certain wastes would be shipped to interim offsite storage locations including SRS prior to disposal. The preferred alternative does not involve SRS. The final PEIS was issued in January 2004 and may be viewed electronically at <http://tis.eh.doe.gov/nepa/eis/eis0337/index.html>. The Record of Decision is scheduled to be issued in August 2004.

- ***Construction and Operation of a Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility at SRS (NUREG-1767)***

DOE has contracted with Duke Cogema Stone & Webster to design, construct, and operate a proposed Mixed Oxide (MOX) Fuel Fabrication Facility that would convert depleted uranium and weapons-grade plutonium into MOX fuel. The proposed MOX facility would be located at SRS in South Carolina. Use of the proposed facility to produce MOX fuel would be part of the DOE's surplus plutonium disposition program. The purpose of the DOE program is to ensure the plutonium produced for nuclear weapons and declared excess to national security is converted to proliferation-resistant forms. The draft EIS can be viewed electronically at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/staff/sr1767>. The comment period for the draft EIS is closed. Due to project scope changes, the final EIS, the final Safety Evaluation Report, and the ROD schedules are now uncertain.

- ***Natural Resources Management Activities at SRS (DOE/EA-0826)***

DOE prepared an environmental assessment (EA) in 1993 to analyze the potential environmental impacts of continued management of SRS natural resources. Based on the analyses in the EA, DOE determined the proposed action was not a major Federal action significantly affecting the human environment within the meaning of NEPA, and issued a finding of no significant impact (FONSI). In 2000, DOE issued a revised FONSI that determined implementation of a revised *Red-Cockaded Woodpecker Management Plan* would have impacts no greater than those described in the 1993 EA. The NEPA review is on hold until the next version of the NRMP is finalized.

- ***Burma Road II Borrow Pit EA (DOE/EA-1501)***

DOE has analyzed the potential consequences associated with the proposed construction, operation, and eventual closure of the Burma Road II Borrow Pit, and its alternatives. The purpose of this proposed facility would be to provide SRS with a new source of structural fill material for site projects. The existing SRS borrow pits are either nearly depleted, already obligated to ongoing environmental restoration projects, or would not provide fill with the proper specifications. In addition, the anticipated need for a future volume and quality of fill for planned SRS projects could not be economically met by offsite sources. The proposed 80-acre borrow pit has an estimated 3.8 million cubic yards of suitable structural fill, which would meet site needs past the year 2020. The FONSI was issued on July 20, 2004. (see article page 1)

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**Mail to:**

**SRS Environmental Bulletin  
Savannah River Site  
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## **The SRS Environmental Bulletin**

**For more information on this or other  
environmental and compliance activities  
at SRS, please contact:**

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